



Joseph Kraft

# Undermining Kissinger

HIGH POLICY differences are widely supposed to have prompted the leak of secret documents on the Indo-Pakistani crisis to Jack Anderson. But most of the evidence suggests that the true cause is a vulgar bureaucratic row aimed at getting the President's chief assistant for national security affairs, Henry Kissinger.

The most striking evidence is like the evidence of the dog that didn't bark in the Sherlock Holmes story. The fact is that no enduring policy issue of high importance is involved in the leaks.

The fight over East Bengal is largely a one-shot affair. Hardly anything that happens on the subcontinent is central to international politics. The United States had already tipped toward Pakistan — and practically everybody knew it—when the leaks were sprung. At the time, as some of Dr. Kissinger's comments make plain, the administration was anticipating a return to more normal relations with New Delhi.

A SECOND BIT of evidence involves Mr. Anderson himself. He is not deeply versed in foreign affairs. No one who aimed to change a line of international policy would single out Mr. Anderson as the agent for deflecting that result through the leak of secret information.

Mr. Anderson's specialty—and it is an important specialty—is putting the journalistic arm on wrong-doers.

By no mere accident the chief fruit of his disclosures was not something that affected policy. The chief consequence was to impugn the integrity of Dr. Kissinger.

As a third bit of evidence there is the state of relations among senior officials and principal agencies of the foreign affairs community in the Nixon administration. Washington veterans tell me that to find a fit counterpart they have to go back to 1950, and the deadly you-or-me rivalry between Dean Acheson, who was then at the State Department, and Louis Johnson, who then ruled the roost at the

Pentagon. In any case, relations nowadays are marked by paranoia, jealousy and hatred.

The chief target for most of the venom is Dr. Kissinger, and some of the fault is his. He has a sharp tongue, and he has been unnecessarily unkind in comments about some of the senior officials of the most prestigious departments.

But most of the resentment has been caused by what Dr. Kissinger does in the service of the President. The present administration has expanded the job of special assistant for national security affairs way beyond what it was under Walt Rostow and McGeorge Bundy. Dr. Kissinger has virtually eliminated from the decision-making business some of the most high-powered men and agencies in town.

The office of Secretary of Defense is perhaps the chief victim. Secretary of Defense Melvin Laird is going to be stepping down soon with practically nothing to his credit. Even his claim (which has at least some foundation) to be the author of the policy for getting out of Vietnam is not widely believed.

He seems hostile to the administration's policy on an arms control agreement, and he was completely cut out of plans for the President's visit to China. His general reputation for trickiness has caused the cognoscenti, rightly or wrongly, to establish him as the short-odds favorite for almost all leaks regarding national security these days. Indeed, some White House officials at first believed Mr. Laird leaked the Pentagon papers.

THE UNIFORMED MILITARY comes a close second in the odds. Many of them do not like the way the White House is winding down the war in Vietnam. Almost all are opposed to the arms control agreement which the White House is now negotiating with the Russians. Some are hostile to the Okinawa reversion agreement which the White House has negotiated. Far, far more than civilians in the government, the uni-

formed military are in the habit of leaking classified information to serve their own interests.

Not that the State Department or other civilian agencies can be entirely exempted from suspicion. Except as regards the Near East, Dr. Kissinger has taken over the whole realm of foreign policy—including even negotiation with foreign officials. This assumption of the State Department's traditional role is bitterly resented by many of the department's leading officials. Indeed, one of them, not long ago, voiced the suspicion that Dr. Kissinger spent an extra day on his last trip to China in order to embarrass the State Department which was handling the United Nations vote on Chinese admission.

With suspicions at that level, there is every reason to figure bureaucratic rivalry as the key element in the background of the Anderson papers. There is no case for lionizing, or even protecting the sources of the of the leaks.

On the contrary, for once there is a case for a presidential crackdown. Mr. Nixon's interest—and that of the country—is to find the source of the leaks and fire them fast.

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